

Chicopee Register



Parks open, playgrounds closed for safety

All playground equipment in Szot Park is taped off to ensure that children don't touch foreign surfaces during the pandemic.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

Municipalities all around the commonwealth are electing to close areas of recreation to curb the spread of COVID-19 infections. For now, Chicopee has yet to take such steps. “Our parks are still open. We believe that it’s really im-

portant for every resident to have access to the outdoors and be able to go outside for a walk and do some sort of recreational during these times,” said Ben Strepka, Parks and Recreation superintendent. While the parks are open, Strepka said all of the city’s playgrounds, athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts,

volleyball courts, skate parks and pavilions are off-limits until further notice. The decision was made based on the fact that the virus can linger on surfaces for an extended time period. The Department of Public Works, which is tasked with maintaining the parks, made items such as playscapes and basketball hoops inaccessible.

DPW Superintendent Elizabette Botelho acknowledged the unique nature of the circumstances. “It’s definitely a crazy time that we’re living through to think that you have to limit the recreational aspects of the city in fear of people spreading

See **PARKS** page 6

COMMUNITY

A parade with a purpose

Car parade to connect with longtime enthusiast

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

A much anticipated car parade will flood emotions in the heart of Chicopee later this spring. On the afternoon of May 2, a community-wide effort will celebrate the birthday of Brandon Sullivan, an intellectually impaired 28-year-old with an affinity for parades. Denise Sullivan, Brandon’s adoptive mother, hatched the idea after the new coronavirus pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2020 Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Brandon, a parade fanatic, had been devastated so Denise couldn’t think of a better way to make his upcoming birthday special.

“One of Brandon’s loves throughout his entire life has been parades. He loves parades so much that he wore out – no exaggeration – our first driveway. He would walk the walk, do every portion of the parade in his mind; he would replicate every aspect of a parade. He ruined many lawns and wore out a driveway,” said Denise Sullivan. Word of the event has spread quickly throughout the city, and the Chicopee Police

See **PARADE** page 5

Denise Sullivan, with help from friends and city officials, helped coordinate a May 2 car parade for her son Brandon. Brandon, born with fetal alcohol syndrome, has been a parade enthusiast all his life.



SUBMITTED PHOTO



DPW

Crews continue work during shutdown

See Page 2



BUSINESS

Local business supports dance studio

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SPORTS

Pioneers will not play 2020 season

See Page 7



EDUCATION

Schools move forward with online learning

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Chicopee Register

Bellamy students hungry for education

Funding gap looms at Riverfront

Will raise a flag in neighborhood

School Committee seat remains vacant

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DPW plows forward during shutdown

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

The Department of Public Works has its eyes set on staying on up to speed. There's a reason that its services are deemed essential; the department's value stretches far beyond the city's road.

"DPW is extremely important in that we affect everybody in the city. We have a lot of responsibilities," said DPW Superintendent Elizabette Botelho. "We do street sweeping, trash pickup and treatment, maintenance of the police vehicles, flood control and we take care of the parks."

In response to the pandemic, the DPW has been forced to implement rotating shifts; half of the department's staff works one week while the other half works the next. The lack of manpower is challenging, but the action minimizes risk of exposure.

"We follow CDC Guidelines and those issued by the Governor for instruction," said Botelho. "Office employees, their desks are already fairly spread apart, and we recently passed out facemasks. When it comes to those who work outside, we're limiting two people to a vehicle; if we can get away with one person in a vehicle, great."

Employees who are working outside are equipped with personal protective equipment and sanitizer, and are required to maintain appropriate physical separation. Previously

scheduled projects are still being pursued, and the Engineering Department continues to put projects out to bid.

All of the city's department heads must be available at all times to their staff members and are working either remotely or in their offices, the DPW's headquarters at Baskin Drive are not empty, but the building will not be fully staffed until restrictions are lifted.

Botelho has preserved an open line of communication with Mayor John Vieau. The two city employees speak on a daily basis and Botelho is also accessible to members of City Council.

Fortunately, no DPW employees have contracted COVID-19, but there have been several scares. Botelho explained that numerous workers were quarantined as a precaution.

"We've had a couple of employees that had a potential exposure, but we were already on the alternating schedules so there was no risk that they had exposed the rest of their group," said Botelho. "They did get excused for work for 14 days, which means that they missed one of their rotations, but so far none of our employees have actually been sick with



Elizabette Botelho

the virus or had any symptoms." The drop off center is one DPW operation that has been considerably affected. The facility remains open but can only accept fresh yard waste and overflow recycling.

"Any pay items, we're not accepting. People need to understand that they're not going to be able to drop off monitors, TVs or mattresses because we're running out of space," said Botelho, noting that a number of hauling vendors are not currently accepting items, leading to the conundrum.

After several residents were forced to leave with the drop off center without being able to deposit large items, the city suspended an online function that allowed residents to pay for the disposal of large items online ahead of their trips to the drop off center.

Botelho reiterated that the DPW is a crucial operation. She feels as though residents often overlook the department's significance, especially during the ongoing crisis.

"When you think of DPW, a lot of people only think of roads, forestry and parks, but the reality of it is that it's not just that," she said. "It's trash, sanitation, it's water and waste water treatment, it's our distribution system. It's repairing roads so that they're safe to drive on and maintaining our public properties so that we don't go into a state where it's a public health risk."

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Teens, Tweens,
and Quarantines

A Virtual Parent Forum

Learn about the impact of COVID-19 on youth mental health and what parents can do to provide support. Discuss practical approaches to parenting, the signs of stress, anxiety, and depression, and how we can help our youth navigate home, family, friends, and school.

Presented by Jon Mattleman from Minding Your Mind with support from Kristal Cleaver, Director of Community Education from Clinical Support Options.

Tues., April 28
4:00pm

Register at:
mindingyourmind.org/TTQ-SPIFFY

Questions? Email:
hwarner@collaborative.org



Westover receives \$69,000 in CARES Act funding

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao announced the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award \$171,047,775 in airport aid to 26 airports in Massachusetts to help respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

This funding is part of the Trump administration’s newly created Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Airport Grant Program, an effort to provide immediate relief to American families, workers and businesses.

“This \$10 billion in emergency resources will help fund the continued operations of our nation’s airports during this crisis and save workers’ jobs,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

This funding will support continuing operations and replace lost revenue resulting from the sharp decline in passenger traffic and other airport business due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The funds are available for airport capital expenditures, airport operating expenses including payroll and utilities, and airport debt payments.

“Thank you to the dedicated men and women from the FAA’s Office of Airports for creating an entirely new program in record time to assist airport sponsors in desperate need of these funds,” said FAA

Administrator Steve Dickson.

Westover Air Reserve Base/Metropolitan Airport is set to receive \$69,000 through the program.

To view an interactive map with the funding amounts, visit https://www.faa.gov/airports/cares_act/map.

The FAA is encouraging airport sponsors to spend the grant funds immediately to help minimize any adverse impact from the current public health emergency. Airport sponsors should work with their local FAA Office of Airports field office on the application and grant-agreement process.

The CARES Act also provides funds to increase the federal share to 100 percent for grants awarded under the fiscal year 2020 appropriations for Airport Improvement Program and Supplemental Discretionary grants. Under normal circumstances, AIP grant recipients contribute a matching percentage of the project costs. Providing this additional funding and eliminating the local share will allow critical safety and capacity projects to continue as planned regardless of airport sponsors’ current financial circumstances.

The CARES Act provides new funds distributed by various formulas for all airports that are part of the national airport system. This includes all commercial service airports, all reliever airports and some public-owned general aviation airports.

Elms adopts alternative grading method for spring semester

The College of Our Lady of the Elms recently announced that the faculty and administration have agreed to provide enrolled students an alternative grading method for the spring 2020 semester.

“During this time of great stress and disruption due to the rapid conversion of courses to remote instruction and the coronavirus pandemic, this alternative grading method will support students in their ability to continue to make progress in their degree programs,” said Vice President of Academic Affairs Walter C. Breau.

Instead of a letter grade, students can request to be assessed on the following scale: Satisfactory (S), Marginal Satisfactory (S-) or Unsatisfactory (U). This alternative grading method (S/U) allows students to select this option on an individual class-by-class basis. Students may select the S/U grading method for all of their classes, some of their classes, or none of their classes.

Students who select the S/U grading method for a few classes will have their

GPA calculated by the remaining A-F letter-graded courses. If students choose the S/U grade method for all of their spring 2020 classes, they will not have a term GPA calculated for the semester. In this case, the students’ cumulative GPA will remain the same as it was in fall 2019.

Any class not chosen to be graded with the S/U method will be graded with a traditional letter grade.

Classes graded with the S/U grading method will be eligible to fulfill degree requirements if the grade received is Satisfactory or Marginal Satisfactory.

Nursing and social work students are not eligible to request this alternative grading method and will receive letter grades for the spring 2020 semester.

Before choosing this grading designation, students are encouraged to consult with their adviser and consider whether or not it may affect their financial aid or any scholarships.

For more information about Elms College, visit elms.edu.

Share your stories of staying at home during pandemic

The Chicopee Register wants to know how you’re coping with the coronavirus closures and how they’ve changed all of our lives — no school, no work, social distancing and staying at home.

We can’t meet our neighbors in the schoolyards, playing fields or workplaces, but we can all share a few snapshots of what life’s like with the kids in the house and the home office working overtime. Take a minute to send in an update on how you’re doing, what fun enrichment activities the kids have been up to, or anything else that’s made the past two weeks a special time in your home. Include full names of the writer or photographer, and anyone visible in each photo. We’ll print the best entries in next week’s newspaper, and in subsequent weeks as the state of emergency continues. The best way to contact us is at chicopeeregister@turley.com.

We would also be glad to publish children’s artwork, essays or photos created during the school closure. Include the creator’s full name, age, and school attended.

For all submissions, also include a telephone number and email address. We won’t publish this information, but may use it to verify identities or ask follow-up questions.

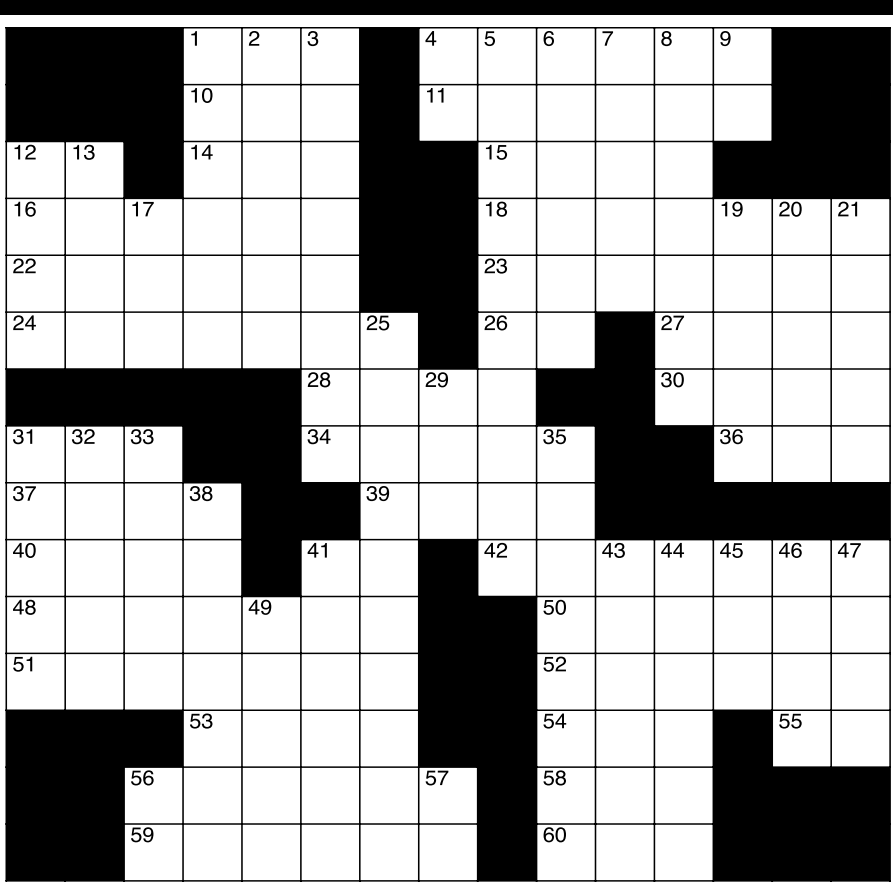
Stay safe out and let us know how you’re doing!

Residents encouraged to vote by mail

In an effort to limit exposure to the new coronavirus, the Board of Registrars of Voters is asking residents of the Second Hampden and Hampshire District (Chicopee Wards 7A, 7B, 8A, and 9A) to apply for an absentee ballot and vote by mail.

The early voting period for the May 19 Special State Election was extended until noon on May 18. Any registered voter who wants to take precautions related to COVID-19 may request that an absentee ballot be mailed to them. Although there is an official application on the city website, www.chicopeema.gov, and MA Election Division website, www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleev/evidx.htm, any form of written request containing the voter’s signature is also acceptable.

To request a mail-in application, call the Registrars of Voters at 594-1550 or send an email to jsurdyka@chicopeema.gov.



- CLUES ACROSS**

 - 1. Revolutions per minute
 - 4. Hymns
 - 10. Brew
 - 11. Did not acknowledge
 - 12. Atomic #77
 - 14. Partly digested food
 - 15. Not one
 - 16. Lesotho capital
 - 18. Copyreading
 - 22. Living organism that feeds on organic matter
 - 23. One’s biological father
 - 24. An aggregate of molecules
 - 26. Equally
 - 27. Khoikhoi people
 - 28. Jump in figure
- skating

 - 30. Lantern
 - 31. TV network
 - 34. Georges __, French philosopher
 - 36. Sharp, shrill bark
 - 37. Albanian monetary units
 - 39. Launched Apollo
 - 40. One who graduated
 - 41. Exist
 - 42. Passed by
 - 48. Very unpleasant smell
 - 50. Graduates
 - 51. Seedless raisin
 - 52. Self-protection
 - 53. Clue
 - 54. Life-savers
 - 55. Ingest too much
 - 56. Misrepresented
 - 58. Small Eurasian deer
- 59. Most mocking
 - 60. Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

 - 1. Flower cluster
 - 2. A form
 - 3. Inner organ regions
 - 4. Local law enforcement
 - 5. A citizen of Senegal
 - 6. Positively charged electrodes
 - 7. Connects granules
 - 8. Business practice
 - 9. The Mount Rushmore State
 - 12. Leader
 - 13. Hindu queen
 - 17. Proofreading mark
 - 19. European country
 - 20. Greek mythological
- nymph

 - 21. Grandfather
 - 25. Clears
 - 29. Amount of time
 - 31. Mollusks
 - 32. German municipality
 - 33. Body part
 - 35. City of Angels
 - 38. Suffocate
 - 41. Pleasing to the eye
 - 43. Poplar trees (Spanish)
 - 44. Ship officer
 - 45. Individual investment account (abbr.)
 - 46. Prefix meaning within
 - 47. Ceased to live
 - 49. Day by day
 - 56. Not color
 - 57. Condition of withdrawal (abbr.)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 5

Counting Turtles

Did you find Turley the Turtle in last week’s edition of the Chicopee Register? Turley appeared 12 times.

We did not receive any guesses last week.

Be sure to look hard in this week’s paper! Email your count along with your name and town of residence by noon on Monday to tyler@turley.com.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

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EDITORIAL

Keep them equipped for emergency

Adept, brave, caring, diligent: four adjectives from the first four letters to the alphabet, each one describing first responders and medical professionals.

Add a fifth: Equipped.

There's not much that we mere mortals can do to relieve the strain on our doctors, nurses and paramedics, but we can at least do everything we can to ensure they have the supplies they need to apply their skills safely.

When we think about the people who save our lives in times of need, we tend to think of what they do and how they behave. We praise them for their knowledge and their willingness to put themselves in danger or discomfort for our sake. We thank them for their professionalism and their empathy.

What we don't often think about — until a prolonged state of emergency like this one points it out — is the boring but painstaking preparation that goes into every ambulance run, every emergency surgery, even every routine blood test. For all the advances in surgical technique and pharmaceutical innovation, for all the millions of dollars spent on ICU and ambulance equipment, two of the greatest improvements in medical treatment in the modern age are sterilization and protective equipment. The importance of doctors, nurses and paramedics keeping patients from being infected while under treatment — and keeping themselves from being infected, so they can continue saving lives — is hard to dispute but often ignored.

This coronavirus state of emergency, now in its second month in Massachusetts, is stretching stockpiles of protective equipment to the limit. Just as ordinary residents are being advised to wear cloth masks or bandanas when they go out, caregivers are donning medical-grade N95 masks to protect themselves and their patients. And these doctors, nurses and paramedics are working full shifts, if not more. They need even more supplies than usual.

In the past weeks, schools, businesses and residents have responded to this need. College science and pre-medical departments have been donating their equipment to the professionals. Around the Pioneer Valley, manufacturers are retooling to produce face masks, ventilators and other medical supplies needed on the front lines of Covid-19 treatment.

More of us can help. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency recently put out a call for anyone with protective equipment to sell or donate it. MEMA is looking for surgical masks, N95 masks, face shields, ventilators, goggles, gloves, gowns, protective suits, booties or shoe covers, head covers, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, alcohol wipes and gallons of bleach. Anyone who has these items in bulk should visit www.mass.gov/forms/covid-19-donation-program or massgov.formstack.com/forms/procurement_form. Items donated to the state will be forwarded to the state agencies or local hospitals, nursing homes, community clinics, public safety agencies, ambulance services and boards of health that have the greatest immediate need.

Every day, while the rest of us do our best to limit our exposure to Covid-19, first responders and medical professionals go out into the world to treat everyone who needs their help, including people infected with this deadly virus. We should do all we can to make sure that they, too, can stay as safe as possible.



CHECK OUT ALL THE

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GUEST COLUMN

Coping with a common community response

By Sara Kendall
Guest Columnist

Stress! You're trying to keep your household in order while still getting some work done during a global pandemic. Your spouse may be stuck at home, trying to get some work done. Or perhaps your partner is dealing with the uncertainty that comes with being furloughed or laid off. You may be helping your kids adjust to online classes for the first time. They need internet access for that, but you need to be online for video conferences. Is the cat walking across your keyboard? Is the dog barking at the delivery driver?

You need to help your kids stay suitably entertained without arguments, even as they deal with being isolated from their friends. And you may be concerned — with good reason — about the safety of your aging parents, grandparents or other family

members you cannot be with.

Perhaps all that family interaction sounds appealing because, in the current crisis, you find yourself utterly alone. You'd rather focus on something else, but it's everywhere on TV and you've read all the books and magazines you have. The highlight of your day comes when you connect with friends or family by text, telephone or a video call. On the bright side, you still have a few rolls of toilet paper.

It's OK to feel as though your world has been turned upside down. It has! Things are not as they were a month ago, and there's no clear forecast for when things may return to whatever normal will mean going forward. But consider this: while each of us faces unique circumstances, the world is experiencing a collective crisis — one that our families, communities, states and nations all must face while each of us tries to function as a good family

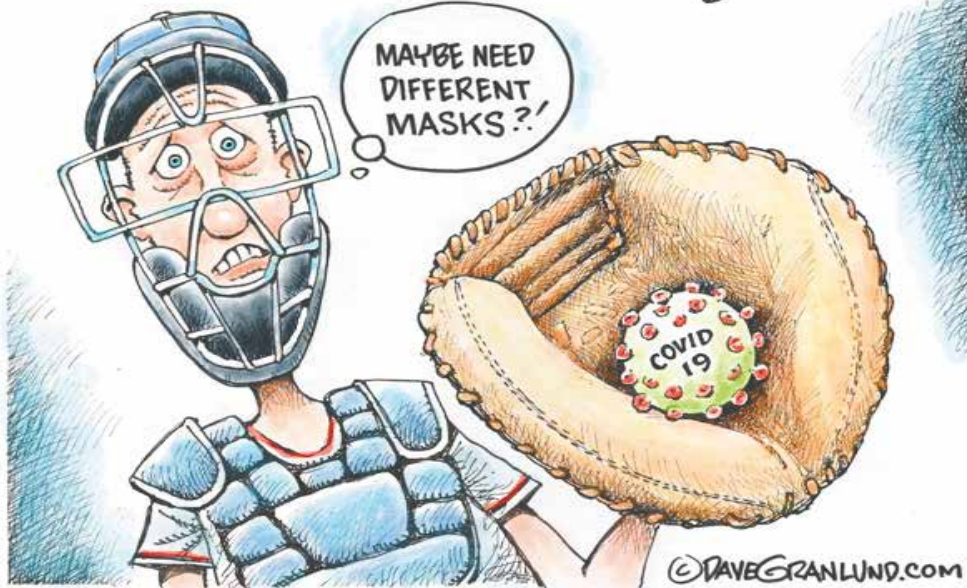
member, worker or caregiver.

With so much we cannot control right now, the stress can be difficult to endure. What can you do to minimize that stressful feeling? Start by acknowledging the truth: you can't measure your performance or evaluate how you feel today in the same way you were able to a month ago. While you're doing what you can within this new, dynamic reality, things are different. So be patient with your family. Be patient with your peers and co-workers. And be patient with yourself.

In spite of what you may see on social media, it's OK if you aren't learning a new language this week, or painting all the rooms in the house, or cooking three gourmet meals a day using pantry items. There's no reason to feel sub-par. You're not failing. It's OK to grieve what you can't do and to realize

See **COPING** page xx

MLB hopes to play in May...



SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Social Security for children and younger wife

By Russell Gloor
Guest Columnist

Dear Rusty: I am 59. My wife is 48 and has been a stay at home mom for 15 years. We have children ages 13, 10 and 5. I know it makes sense to delay the start of benefits, but I understand that it's more complicated when small children are involved. Does it make sense for me to begin receiving benefits at 62 so I can also collect more for the children? *Signed: Older Father*

Dear Older Father: Yes, the issue is more complicated when children are involved. Here's why: If you claim your own Social Se-

curity at age 62, your minor children would be able to receive child benefits, and your wife would also be able to receive "child-in-care" benefits, even though she is not yet age-eligible for regular spouse benefits. Usually, a minor child is entitled to 50 percent of the parent's full retirement age SS amount, and a younger care-giving wife is entitled to the same. But when there are multiple dependents collecting on the same worker's record the Family Maximum applies.

The Family Maximum limits the amount of total benefits which can be received by the family to 150 percent to 188 percentage

of the worker's FRA benefit amount. Social Security determines the Family Maximum for each individual case with a complex formula that uses your "primary insurance amount" (or "PIA," the amount you get at your FRA). Your PIA is broken into four parts and a different percentage of each part is taken and summed up to arrive at your Family Maximum. Then your PIA is subtracted from the Family Maximum amount and the remainder is equally divided among your minor children and wife. Once a minor child turns 18 (or 19 if still in high

See **BENEFITS** page xx

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The *Chicopee Register* welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to chicopeeregister@turley.com or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

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POETRY CORNER

PERPETUAL TOGETHERNESS

By Marge Jesberger
Chicopee

Surprise, empathize, overlook, share, support, Cherish, compromise, enjoy, captivate, connect, Care, cherish, communicate, congratulate, Restore, inspire, amuse, educate, admire, forgive, Sustain, sympathize, trust, believe, tolerate, Compliment, compensate, listen, Commiserate, and above all “LOVE”

BENEFITS from page 4

school) that child no longer receives benefits and the Family Maximum is recomputed, with the new amount equally divided among the remaining dependents. When your youngest child turns 16, your wife will no longer be eligible for child-in-care benefits. But there’s more to consider.

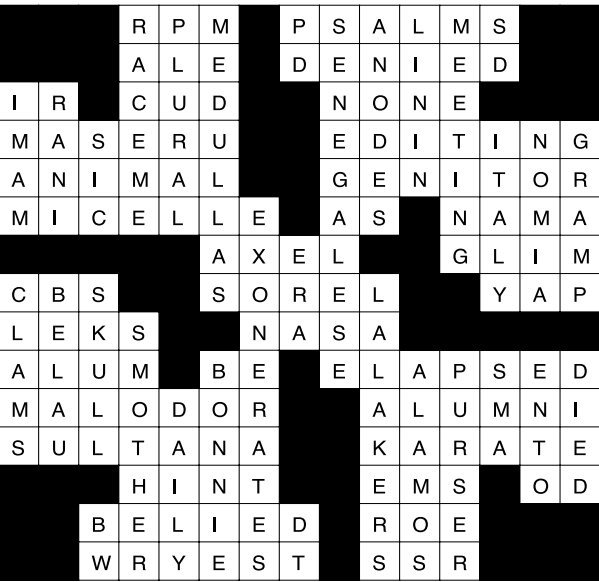
By taking your benefit at age 62, it will be cut by 30 percent from what it would be if you waited until your full retirement age to claim, and that reduction is permanent. Plus that reduced benefit will mean your wife’s benefit as your widow, should you pre-decease her, would be less than it might otherwise be if you waited until later to claim.

Until you reach your full retirement age, you will also be subject to Social Security’s “earnings test” which limits the amount of money you can earn before Social Security takes back some of your benefits. The limit for 2020 is \$18,240 and if you exceed that amount, SS will take back benefits equal to half of the excess over the limit. They take back those benefits by withholding your SS until they recover what you owe because you exceeded the limit. And, if your benefits are withheld because you exceed the earnings limit, your children and wife will not get their benefits for any month(s) that your benefits are withheld. FYI, the earnings limit increases by about 2.6 times in the year you reach your FRA and no longer applies once you reach your FRA, but

any dependent benefits not paid because you exceeded the earnings limit are lost and cannot be recovered.

So, as you can see, there are many things you should consider. If you will be retired from working at age 62 and don’t need to worry about the earnings limit, then claiming then, along with the dependent benefits, could be a prudent choice. But if you will continue to work and earn a significant salary, you might very well find that the benefits you and your dependents lose due to the earnings limit will overshadow any advantage you might gain by filing at that time. And, you might also find that the permanent cut in your own benefit because you claimed early, along with the reduction to your wife’s future survivor benefit amount, will make claiming at age 62 less attractive.

Russell Gloor is a certified Social Security adviser through the Association of Mature American Citizens. This column is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.



COPING from page 4

that you can’t be as productive as before. Acknowledge how much you are accomplishing given a whole new set of challenges. And remember, this collective experience is new to everyone. You’re not in it alone.

With all we are facing, it may seem impossible to find balance, but our friends and neighbors are trying. Last weekend I saw a family on their front lawn, sitting in camp chairs decorated with balloons and a homemade Happy Birthday sign. There was excitement as a parade of cars drove by honking and waving birthday greetings. Was it the birthday celebration they’d been planning? Unlikely, but it’s one they will talk

about for a long time.

In some communities, people are ringing bells or turning porch lights off and on at 8 o’clock each evening to honor the essential workers keeping us safe, supplied and healthy. Bells ringing or lights flickering throughout a neighborhood are wonderful ways for communities to express a shared message of gratitude. It’s something we can do together with meaning and purpose, something we can be part of even as we do our part by staying home.

That sense of common purpose is important for adults to demonstrate, particularly to children who learn by what is modeled for them. News stories of people acting out can be scary, but if the children hear

their neighbors ringing bells or see them flicking their lights together each evening, it presents an opportunity for dialog to explain why we are doing this. The message is simple: even with everything that is so hard for everyone, we can choose to be part of something good.

As we find ways to adapt to changing circumstances, let’s acknowledge that we’re part of a shared experience. Let’s be patient, kind and grateful, with others and ourselves. If you want to talk about how you are feeling call 844-MHA-WELL.

Sara Kendall, MSW, LICSW, is the vice president of clinical operations for MHA in Springfield.

PARADE from page 1

Department committed to partake in the fun. The department will coordinate traffic during the parade, which will embark from the parking lot of Elms College at 2 p.m. on May 2.

During the parade, a police cruiser with it’s lights flashing will be manned by Public Information Officer Michael Wilk. He explained why Brandon’s birthday is worthy of celebration.

“Brandon is part of a group that I speak to every so often; he’s a great kid, and when I saw what his mother posted, I said, ‘Absolutely, we’ll be involved,’ because it’s the least we can do. We understand how hard this is; people don’t have their normal birthdays going on so I told [Denise] we’ll be there,” said Wilk.

Denise is pleasantly surprised by the outpouring of support that the parade plans have garnered. The event continues to gain traction online, and participants are expected to hail from all across Western Massachusetts.

“When I originally posted this up on the Chicopee Area Community Forum, I took my chances,” she said. “The response has been so overwhelming that I can’t even begin to thank every single person who has a hand in this or will have a hand

in this. It’s unbelievable how it has morphed from a few cars riding by to the original post having been shared over 225 times.”

Brandon was born with fetal alcohol syndrome, which caused his disability, but he never used the condition as an excuse. He overcame his impairment to march with the Shriners in several parades of his own before retiring.

“When I originally posted this up on the Chicopee Area Community Forum, I took my chances. The response has been so overwhelming that I can’t even begin to thank every single person.”

- Denise Sullivan,
Chicopee mother

“He realized that if he was in the parade, he couldn’t see the parade. He would rather see the parade; he wants to commentate the parade and tell everybody in the world about parades. Those are his proudest moments; he can tell you everything about every parade he has ever been to,” said Denise.

Hailey Raleigh, marketing and media coordinator for Hampshire Towing, is organizing the parade

alongside Denise. She asks participants to gather in the Elms College Parking between 1:30 and 1:45 p.m. on May 2.

The parade will embark from the college and march down Springfield Street before turning onto Austin Street and then Saratoga Avenue. The procession will then arrive on Roosevelt Avenue, home to Brandon.

“It’s a great way to get involved in my community and my neighborhood,” said Raleigh, who lives in close proximity to the Sullivan’s. “We decided that meeting at Elms was the best place to give Brandon the full effect of being able to see everything as much as possible. We’re going to loop, and we’re hoping someone films it so that he’ll have that memory forever.”

More information can be found on a Facebook page created for the event titled “Brandon’s Birthday Car Parade.” The police department will be present to monitor social distancing, and Wilk is excited to be part of a meaningful celebration.

“Obviously, people are stuck at home, and we understand that it’s hard, especially in a case like this. It’s important to have that interaction and for [Brandon] to see that people care and people are out there who really want to show him that we’re there,” said Wilk.

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Small businesses have each other's backs during outbreak

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

In a gesture that defines the meaning of community, one small family-owned business executed a fundraiser to support another. Lotus and Compass, a local boutique, raised approximately \$1,600 for the Ohana School of Performing Arts last weekend.

Before opening a brick and mortar store in Chicopee Center in 2019, Lotus and Compass operated entirely online. Co-owner Melanie Houle noted that familiarity with the online sales platform has kept the business alive and well during the ongoing lockdown.

On the contrary, the performing arts school on Sheridan St. is struggling to keep afloat. Ohana owner Ashley Kohl, a former professional dancer and local television personality, moved her business from South Hadley to Chicopee last year; the debt she assumed has thus far prevented her from receiving federal aid.

"Our overhead is substantial," said Kohl. "Essentially, looking at numbers, I wasn't sure how we would make it through this without having to close my doors for good. Right now, my friends have stepped up and said, 'What can we do to help?'"

Houle and her children have danced at Kohl's studio for the past three years. When Houle saw that the business was in dire need of assistance, she leaped into action.

From Friday, April 17 through Sunday, April 19, half of the boutique's online sales were donated to the school of performing arts. Houle committed to the action with no hesitation.

"To me it was a no-brainer. Ohana is more than just a dance studio," she said. "It's a family, and it really has become a safe place for our kids to go and really celebrate moving and dance. It's all about kindness; the whole vibe there."

Neither Houle nor Kohl could predict how much money the fundraiser would raise. Both women were ecstatic at the total that was accumulated; Kohl noted that the contributions were not only monetary in nature.

"What I've found is that it's so much more than the financial support; knowing that someone believes in you that much and knows that you have a purpose that needs to be filled. What it gives me is security financially but also hope and belief in myself," said Kohl, crediting Melanie's husband Brandon, who also co-owns the boutique.



FILE PHOTO

Brandon (left) and Melanie Houle, owners of Lotus & Compass, Inc. helped raise nearly \$1,600 for the Ohana School of Performing Arts.

Melanie Houle stressed the fact that many "small businesses are being left out in the cold," and that the vast majority of small businesses have not yet received federal funding. She hopes to increase public awareness of the rugged, unfavorable scenarios that these businesses are currently facing.

Referring back to the the performing arts school, Houle explained why the effort was worthwhile. Ohana holds a special place in her family's heart, and Houle will continue to stand by Kohl's side.

"Ashley has poured her whole heart and soul into this business," said Houle. "When I saw that they were not sure if they'd be able to reopen after this, it really broke my heart because it's such a unique and beautiful community and it's one that my family has had the pleasure of being a part of."

Kohl struggled to find the words to adequately voice her appreciation. She thanked the Houles for being true friends.

"It's times like these that you realize how special the people in your life are; friends like Melanie and Brandon. What they've started and what they do for others is something that we should all learn from. I can't speak highly enough about them and who they are and that they really do lead a life that's driven by love," said Kohl.

The Ohana School of Performing Arts is still offering classes online. Kohl can be reached at Ashley@ohanaperformingarts.com.

The boutique can be accessed online at lotusandcompass.com.

PARKS from page 1

the virus," she said. "With the basketball hoops, there are several different styles; some can easily be removed and others can't. The Parks Department constructed covers to put over the hoops [that can't be removed] to stop kids from using them."

Strepka noted that Chicopee police officers are monitoring each of the city's parks to ensure that residents abide by social distancing guidelines. Signage has been posted at each location to increase community awareness of the temporary restrictions. Much like the DPW,



STAFF PHOTOS BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

Signs like this are displayed at the city's parks, informing residents that certain areas are closed off for safety during the current public health emergency.

the Parks and Recreation Department has not deviated from its planned schedule. Several traditional projects are currently being undertaken.

"We're finishing up some spring cleanups and have begun working on seeding and fertilizing



By April 20, the tape surrounding the swing set at Rivers Park had already been tampered with.

Szot Stadium Field. We've also begun work on some of our baseball diamonds as well. Our hope is that everything kind of gets lifted soon and we can resume our operations," said Strepka, adding that the department is also "prepared for anything that's thrown our way."

The department is in regular communication with

City Hall, primarily with Mayor John Vieau and the Board of Health, and collaborative relationship has taken form with colleagues outside of Chicopee.

"We've also been working with other towns as well. The Park and Rec community is a tight-knit community. We just try to see what other towns are doing and hope that we're doing our best to protect our residents and still give them avenues to recreation," said Strepka.

Regarding both mental and physical health, Strepka believes that outdoors activity is highly beneficial. In a city with a significant urban population, he feels as though residents should be entitled to a breath of fresh air.

"I know that being cooped up inside all day can kind of drive you crazy and I think getting out, going for a walk and enjoying some fresh air can be relieving," he said.

When visiting the parks, it's imperative for residents to abide by social distance guidelines. Strepka warned that violating the rules could lead to an incident that forces a park closure and urged residents to steer clear of vandalism or destruction of property.

"It's nothing that we could have planned for or saw coming. However, it's important for us to work together as a community to overcome this," he said.

Residents can learn of new developments on the department's recently launched website chicopeerec.com, which utilizes the MyRec platform.

Strepka added that the department is also attempting to move forward with OPEE Summer Adventures, a youth-based summer day program that is set to begin on June 29 and run through mid-August.

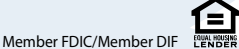
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SPRING SPORTS

Spring season looking bleak

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – As the state celebrates Patriots Day along with the spring vacation week where many spring teams would normally be playing baseball and lacrosse games at 11 a.m. and 12 noon rather than the tradition 4 p.m. starts, there is nothing happening on any fields this week.

The MIAA's Board of Directors, in conjunction with guidance and recommendations made by the Tournament Management Committee, head into a crucial week seeking to start the spring season on May 4.

However, that start date is contingent on Gov. Charlie Baker starting the process of "opening the state back up."

Unfortunately, with time waning, and guidance from the federal government, it does not appear as though Massachusetts will be opening up, specifically for classes, on May 4. No school means no spring sports for athletes across the state.

Massachusetts is not among the nearly 30 states in the nation that has shut down school for the remainder of the academic year. Baker has said he does not want to shut schools down for the remainder of the year and was hopefully to get students back into the classroom even for a short period of time.

However, the MIAA's current plan for a 12-game slate and sectional playoff run is contingent on schools being re-opened on May 4. Another delay, which would likely be a minimum of two weeks in length, would be catastrophic to the plan.

"We (the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference) came up with a modified schedule for the shortened season," said Agawam High School Athletic Director David Stratton, a member of the PVIAC Board of Directors. "But it could be a futile exercise."

Time is running low, but Baker has yet to make a call on whether or not the stay-at-home advisory, non-essential businesses being closed, and schools being shuttered will remain in effect.

The last meeting of the MIAA Board of Directors was held by teleconference on Thursday, April 16. At the meeting, the board voted on some sim-

WESTERN MASS. PIONEERS

Pioneers will not play 2020 regular season

The GM of the team hopes there will be some exhibitions and an Open Cup this year

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

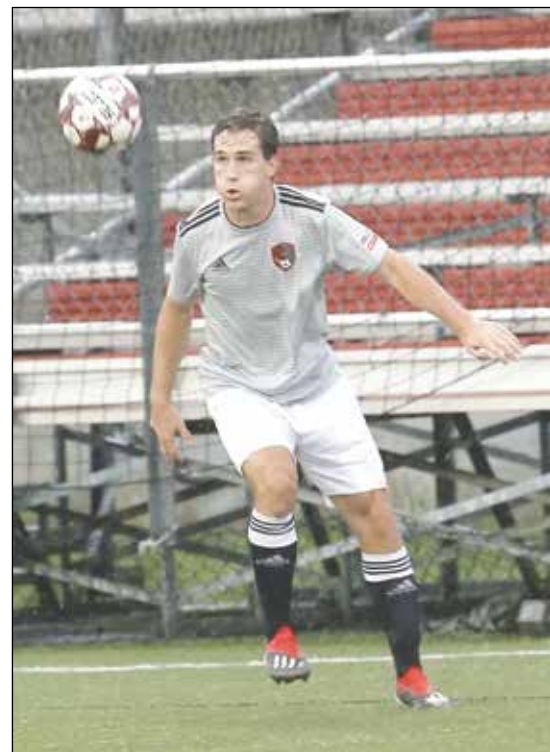
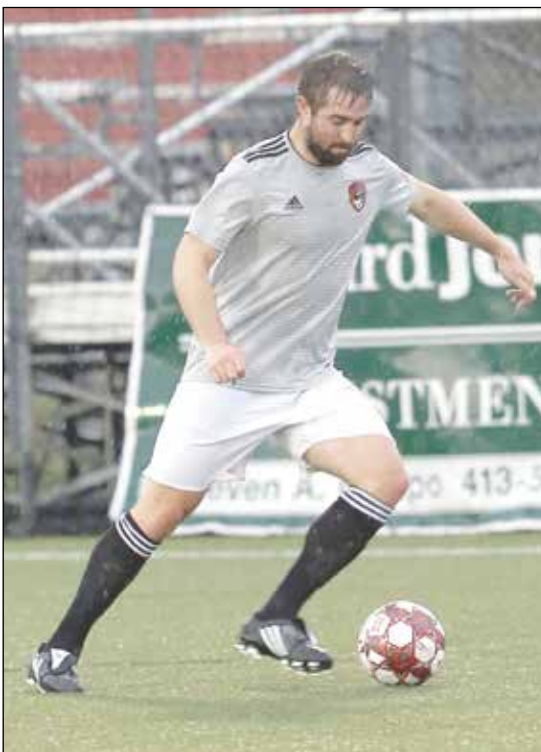
LUDLOW – It was an unprecedented season for the Western Mass. Pioneers in the 2019 season. The team made it all the way to conference semifinals last year before suffering their first defeat of the season.

Now, with plenty of players from last season and their coach returning, they will not have the opportunity to follow up on that great success.

The USL-Two announced last Wednesday that the Northeast Division has made the difficult decision not to participate in any type of 2020 regular season due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Greg Kolodziej, the general manager of the Pioneers, expressed disappointment in the fact the Pioneers will not be able to follow up on what they accomplished last season.

"Yeah, definitely crazy and unprecedented times," said Kolodziej. "We were extremely excited about this season. We had a good group of players returning from last year's team along with some excellent new recruits. We had qualified for the U.S. Open Cup, and were looking forward to some fun and ex-



PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM

Left: Ben Brewster starts a move up the field. The Pioneers will not play in the 2020 regular season. Right: Guillermo Deal tries to settle a ball during last year's division clinching game.

citing games at the stadium this summer. So on that note it's a bit disheartening."

Kolodziej said he is hopeful the team will get the opportunity to play some games this season. He is hoping to see the Open Cup be rescheduled and possibly have some exhibition matches later this year.

"But obviously some things are out of your control," he said. "But as of this week, the US

Open Cup has not made a decision as to what they are doing with their tournament, so there is a chance we could be playing if they choose to go ahead with it.

"Other than that, we will monitor the health situation in the coming weeks and try to provide our great fans with some action at the stadium when and if we can. We are hoping to schedule exhibition games and for the young soccer players in the area,

put together our summer soccer camp program."

The league released a statement last Wednesday addressing the 2020 season:

These are unprecedented times as the world faces a challenging COVID-19 health crisis. And while the issues at hand are about much more than sport, as supporters of our clubs we want

See **PIONEERS** page 8

VALLEY BLUE SOX

Blue Sox looking to start regular season on time

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox were champions of the New England Collegiate Baseball League in 2017 and 2018. They made it to the semifinals in last year's playoffs.

Now, more than ever, college athletes will be looking at leagues like the NECBL to make their mark for their colleges and prospective baseball scouts. The NECBL released a statement recently regarding the status of the 2020 season, currently set to open in up early June:

We continue to closely monitor the rapidly changing

situation involving the outbreak of COVID-19 and its impact on our 2020 summer season.

We are hopeful that we will play baseball this summer, and we continue to plan for our summer season, including accommodating college seniors who are now eligible to play and what our season may look like. That said, our first priority is the health and well-being of our players, host families and fans. As part of our monitoring we are communicating with MLB, the NCAA and the National Alliance of Collegiate Summer

Baseball. We will regularly review decisions and guidance from federal, state and local officials, and the leadership of our host communities to obtain the most current information on the virus, and to understand and implement the most current recommendations and directives.

As we assess this changing situation, foremost we recognize that college athletes lost their spring season, and because of this, summer baseball is more important to our players and coaches than ever before. That's why – even in the context

of today - we will continue to plan for summer ball and make every extra effort to get our college players on the field. Our season may not look the same, but our role in player development has never been more important. And to our dedicated fans and sponsors, your support has never been more important. We appreciate your long and steadfast support and are hopeful to see you again this summer at the ballpark.

As we make decisions about our summer season, we will keep you fully informed.

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See **SPRING** page 8

Springfield Thunderbirds help out area hospitals with meals

SPRINGFIELD – On Thursday, April 16, the Springfield Thunderbirds will be teaming up with two of their local restaurant partners, Uno Pizzeria & Grill and Nadim's Downtown Mediterranean Grill, to deliver over 50 meals to staff at both Baystate Medical Center and Mercy Medical Center.

"Though we are not able to play hockey at this time, we want to make sure we are doing our part to give back to the community that has supported us since our inception. This is just one way we are able to say 'thank you' to the men and women on the front lines of this pandemic while also proving some support

to our local small business partners," said Nathan Costa, President of the Springfield Thunderbirds.

Uno Pizzeria & Grill will provide lunch to staff members of Baystate's Adult Acute Care and Acute Neuroscience departments, while Nadim's will feed Mercy Medical Center's Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department.

"We are proud to partner with the Thunderbirds and Unos to feed our medical heroes helping to fight the Coronavirus pandemic. As a business with deep roots in this community, it is important we do our part to help our friends and neighbors get through this crisis," stated Nad-

im Kashouh, chef and owner of Nadim's Mediterranean Grill.

Funds for the meals will come from the T-Birds Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity established by the franchise to benefit causes in Springfield and surrounding Pioneer Valley communities.

"We are thankful to the Thunderbirds for including us in these special deliveries," said Uno Pizzeria & Grill owner Michael Hurwitz. "We have a great relationship, and it means a lot for the team to think of us during these times to provide the food for these heroes on the front line."

The mission of the T-Birds Founda-

tion is to serve the Springfield community and the Pioneer Valley beyond every win and loss through a focus on providing and supporting initiatives in the areas of health and wellness, youth enrichment, and civil service.

"Baystate Health is so grateful food donations that support our healthcare providers as they continue to serve on the frontlines and battle COVID-19," said the team at the Baystate Health Foundation. "The Springfield Thunderbirds' generous donation of meals from Uno Pizzeria & Grill for Baystate Health team members is a kind and much appreciated gesture."

FACES AND PLACES

Business students inducted into Beta Sigma Gamma

SPRINGFIELD – Dr. Sharianne Walker, dean of the College of Business, announced that the Western New England University chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society of AACSB-accredited business schools worldwide, inducted 35 students this spring into this organization.

Among those inducted into the society are Chad D. Parent and Lyndsey A. Brennan, of Chicopee.

Eligible sophomores, juniors and seniors comprise the top 10 percent of their respective classes and eligible graduate students are among the top 20 percent of their respective graduate programs.

Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League seeking new players

REGION – The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday

games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother's Day Saturday game in early May. However, due to the current circumstances, the league schedule has been pushed back. The league still plans to play its season once bans on gatherings are lifted. The league is built on comradery, fair play, and having a good time with friends. If interested in trying out, go to

www.valleywheelbaseball.com. The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site. For further information, you can contact the league's commissioner, Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be taking place in the early weeks of April, weather permitting, with a draft following the tryouts.

NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

For more information on news or community features for The Chicopee Register, please email chicopeeregister@turley.com.

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PIONEERS from page 7

to share with you our appreciation for the patience you have shown as we worked closely with league officials as well as local, state, and national health authorities to understand the impact of this global pandemic on our upcoming season.

After careful thought and consideration, it was determined that the challenges of our division being spread over multiple states, coupled with the existing health crises, were too great of a risk to our long-term sustainability, and we have therefore made the difficult decision to forego our participation in the 2020 USL League Two season.

"We absolutely support the Northeast Division's decision," said USL Vice President Joel Nash. "At the end of the day, it was about much more than soccer and we look forward to welcoming them back even stronger in 2021."



PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM

Micah Umeh sends a shot away.

Every member club in the Northeast has worked tirelessly to provide the highest level of soccer possible to all of our communities in thrilling, family-friendly environments, each with their own local flavor. However, given the fluidity of the situation and the uncertainty presented to us, we felt the decision was necessary for the greater good of all involved. While we are bitterly disappointed about this turn of events, especially for the fans, players, and our supportive Northeast communities, we also vow to come back bet-

ter than ever in 2021.

In the meantime, all six Northeast Division clubs encourage everyone within our respective communities to be kind to one another, to look after those in need, and to encourage social distancing as much as possible. As clubs, we will continue to stay active and engaged in our communities off the pitch, and welcome any and all support in those endeavors. Only together can we get through these trying times and come out stronger for it. We will get through this together.

SPRING from page 7

ple items, stating that in a cost-saving measure, tournament semifinal games would be held at the site of the higher seed. Semifinals and finals are normally held on neutral turf.

However, in the case of baseball and softball, UMass and Western New England University have been that neutral turf. College campuses have remained closed, and it is very possible colleges may not want events at their fields. Some colleges have even talked about continu-

ing distance learning until a vaccine is found for the coronavirus.

While it was not a formal vote, the minutes of the meeting note that more than 20 states had officially called off spring sports, specifically. But the MIAA will follow the guidance and expectations made by Gov. Baker.

The next meeting of the MIAA Board of Directors is set for May 5. However, a special meeting could be scheduled sooner if and when Baker makes a decision about the remainder of the school year.

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Second, we have posted throughout the store, on our website and on Facebook our health and safety rules. We kindly ask that you adhere to these in order to protect our customers and hard working staff. If you don't have access to or forgot your gloves no worries here! We are providing a pair of free gloves to each shopper as they enter the store. We are all in this together! Be well and stay safe!

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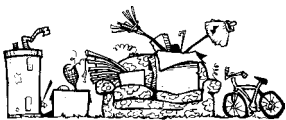
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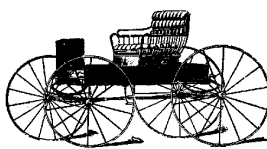
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1	2	3	4
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9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	Base Price \$26.50	22	Base Price \$27.50
23	Base Price \$27.50	24	Base Price \$28.00
25	Base Price \$28.50	26	Base Price \$29.00
27	Base Price \$29.50	28	Base Price \$30.00
29	Base Price \$30.50	30	Base Price \$31.00
31	Base Price \$31.50	32	Base Price \$32.00
33	Base Price \$32.50	34	Base Price \$33.00
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PUBLIC NOTICES

More Public Notices on page 9

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By Ma. Gen Laws c.255, Sec. 39A, **CHUCK'S TOWING 78 West St., Chicopee, MA** is holding a private sale of a vehicle **May 14, 2020 at 2:00 PM** to satisfy garage keepers lien for storage and towing charges and expenses of notices of sale.

2006 BMW 525 XI
VIN# WBANF33536CS37910
Owner: Michael Sullivan
Date of Tow: 11-26-18

2008 Infiniti G35
VIN# JNKBV61F58M279819
Owner: Ginette M. Varges
Co-Owner: Steven Morales
Date of Tow: 9-22-18
4/23 4/30 5/7/2020

NOTICE

The Massachusetts State Lottery Commission (MSLC) will offer a KENO monitor

to display the game to duly qualified existing KENO To Go Agent(s), as listed below:

Scrappy's Liquor Mart
577 East Street
Chicopee, MA, 01013

Written objection hereto, by Local Licensing Authority, must be received by: Gregory Polin, General Counsel, Massachusetts State Lottery Commission (MSLC), 150 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02150 - 3573
4/23/2020

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on **April 24, 2020** at **Interstate Towing, Inc** the following Motor Vehicles

will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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1987 GREAT DANE TRAILER
VIN: 1G9AA9320HB130319
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2001 CADILLAC DEVILLE
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Jonathan Kelley/Shawn Walker
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Springfield, MA 01151

2002 MAZDA PROTÉGÉ
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Doris Pessolano

72 Old Lane Rd
Springfield, MA 01129

2002 SUBARU IMPREZA
VIN: JF1GG65522H808975
Damien Dalton
14 Matthews Rd
Southwick, MA 01077

2003 FORD F250 SUPER DUTY
VIN: 1FTNX21L63ED45062
Colin Clegg
125 Abbey St
South Hadley, MA 01075

2004 LAND ROVER DISCOVERY
VIN: SALTL19414A837462
Daniel Lamarier
165 Russell Rd
Westfield, MA 01085

2005 FORD ESCAPE
VIN: 1FMYU92Z25KD52530
Susan Fernandez
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Westfield, MA 01085

2005 VOLKSWAGEN

PASSAT
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Daejan Marsh
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2006 HONDA ACCORD
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Emma Janeiro
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Springfield, MA 01109

2007 FORD FUSION
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Hebert Wellington
377 Maple St
Bridgeport, MA 06608

2008 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY
VIN: 2A8HR54P78R122894
Laceen Labarre
19 Riverboat Village
South Hadley, MA 01075

2009 TOYOTA YARIS
VIN: JTDKT903795245036
Grady Ponder
24 Prince St

Springfield, MA 01109

2010 FORD F150
VIN: 1FTEX1E87AFA81745
Joseph Mello
5 Bates St
Westfield, MA 01085

2011 DODGE AVENGER
VIN: 1B3BD2FG1BN591623
Edward Kendall
41 Brookfield Rd
North Brookfield, MA 01535

2013 DODGE DART
VIN: 1C3CDFAA0DD106642
Leslie Greenlaw
72 Forest Ave
Fort Fairfield, ME 04742

2015 HONDA ACCORD
VIN: 1HGCR2F50FA068403
Diane Giguier
1004 Symmes Circle
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4/09, 4/16, 4/23/2020

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Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

Schools power ahead with remote learning

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

The new coronavirus pandemic has rendered Chicopee's public schools sleeping giants, the largest set of empty buildings in the city. The spirit of the district is alive, however, as thousands of students have become acquainted with online learning.

"Right now, the district's Remote Learning Plan is a combination of virtual platforms for those that have technology or have signed out a Chromebook, and also there's some packets available as well. We're really just focusing on deepening and widening some of the standards and then moving ahead at a very slow and flexible pace depending on the classroom," said Superintendent of Schools Lynn Clark.

Chicopee's educators have been thrown into the fire. They're tasked with the responsibility of facilitating online learning, a skill that not all of the district's staff were previously familiar with.

"I give all educators a lot of credit because everyone has had to learn how to do their jobs either remotely or online, which is completely different than in the classroom. It's not the same as teaching someone face to face," said Laura Demakis, president of the Chicopee Education Association.

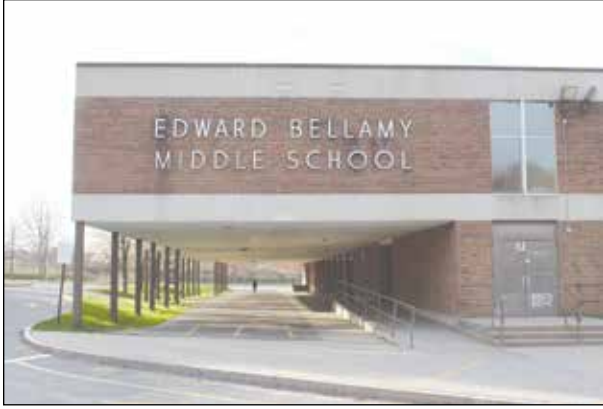
"This is totally new for everybody. In all of the training that we've had, we're expected to get our



Chicopee High School glimmers in the early evening sun on April 20.



Chicopee Comprehensive High School would normally be bustling with activity on a spring evening.



Bellamy Middle School sits seemingly abandoned on a beautiful spring night in April.



It is unlikely that Chicopee Academy will host its typical graduation ceremony this spring.

Master's degrees and our [certifications], but nothing has prepared anybody for what we have to do now," continued Demakis, a Bellamy Middle School teacher.

Demakis feels as though the communication between the CEA and the district has been phenomenal to the benefit of the city's students. Clark confirmed that the district is prioritizing communication with a number of groups.

"There is a very open

line. I directly sent out the Remote Learning Plan to every single staff member and every single family," said Clark. "I've been in contact with other superintendents regularly about different decisions; we talk about a lot of things like grading and report cards and the possibility of summer school."

Additionally, the district has lent Chromebooks to students who lack access to technology in their homes. Families of students who need tablets but

have not yet received them are urged to contact the district immediately.

Inside of Chicopee's schools, custodial staffs are working in rotating shifts to prevent anyone from becoming "run down or exposed," said Clark. Access into buildings will be heavily limited "until the peak is over," she added.

The district did not begin rotating custodial employees until all of the schools were "deep cleaned," a process that was completed several

weeks ago. Clark credited Maintenance Director Scott Champlain for being "flexible and understanding and absolutely fabulous to work with."

Clark referred back to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic and the effect that it has had on Chicopee's families. She assured families that students will not be punished for falling behind.

"On an important note, if families or students are feeling stressed or if there was an illness in

their family and they want to talk to somebody, I want everybody to know that we do still have our counselors and licensed social workers still on staff. They are only a phone call or an email away and they are able to do some counseling online. They are available."

Demakis agreed entirely with Clark's message. She too "understands the struggles" that have confronted families throughout Chicopee.

"I can't even imagine how difficult it is for families who have taken this on. I think that they should feel proud of whatever they're doing and however they're doing it," said Demakis. "People have to do the best they can and not stress that it's not good enough. If they feel like it's not good enough and want more support, if they reach out to the district or the teachers in anyway, they will get that support."

Beyond the intricacies of online learning, Chicopee teachers are still attempting to grasp the fact that they will not see their students until May 4, if not longer. Demakis described a sensation that many of the city's educators are feeling.

"Honestly, the hardest adjustment has been not seeing the students face-to-face. Those relationships are really important to everybody, and I think that everyone misses it. I know that everyone's looking forward to when we can get back to normal again," she said.



Chicopee Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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